

SCENIC RESOURCES

(1) Overview

Over the past 15 months, the scenery resource management on the Forest has focused primarily on input to midlevel analyses, EISs and EAs for vegetation management projects, and a CE for a fuels reduction project. No post-project monitoring has occurred to date mainly because the majority of projects analyzed during the past 15 months have not been implemented yet. An example of assessing previous management practices on the scenery resource is displayed in the following write-up excerpt.

Excerpt From Observations in Flathorn/Gegoka Area of Dunka Project Area

On 5/26/05 selected resource conditions within the far eastern portion of the Dunka Project area were visited. The visit focused on: (1) Natural and/or management influenced vegetative succession and (2) Motorized use/impacts within selected older timber sales that encompassed or were adjacent to the Flathorn/Gegoka ski trail network. Vegetation establishment within treatment units and on temporary access roads, road closure effectiveness, & motorized use/impacts were noted. This visit was not intended to be intensive or extensive but rather to present a cursory overview of existing conditions and how the landscape can be expected to respond to similar future treatments.

Vegetative Screening Between Older Harvest Units and Ski Trails



Schimel Sale. 5 Year Old Harvest Unit 150' from Ski Trail.
Harvest Unit Well Screened from View From Ski Trail.



Kit Kat Sale. Temporary Rd. into 15 Year Old Harvest Unit.
Near Ski trails. Harvest Unit Well Screened



Schimel Sale. 5 Year Old Harvest Unit 150' from Ski Trail.
Harvest Unit Well Screened from View From Ski Trail.

Observations and Conclusions pertinent to visuals

- (1) Over time vegetative growth (planted and/or succession) within treatment units has partially to fully re-established.
- (2) 150' uncut buffers between ski trails & treatment units were effective in screening views into harvested areas.

Conclusions

Effects of prior vegetative treatments and road building has become less visible over time. These observations were made within habitats similar to those scheduled for vegetative treatments, temporary road construction and decommissioning. Subsequently one could expect similar recovery from proposed actions in the Flathorn/Gegoka area. Moreover our observations indicate that scenic integrity in highly used recreation areas (egg.) Ski trails can coexist with forest management provided that appropriate project design features and/or mitigation measures are implemented.

(2) Monitoring Activities

Monitoring Question

Are forest management activities providing scenic quality as defined by the Scenic Integrity Objectives?

Monitoring Driver(s): Desired Condition. D-SC-1. The scenic environment within the Forest ranges from landscapes with high scenic quality, displaying little or no evidence of management activities, to landscapes with low scenic quality where evidence of management activities dominate. High scenic quality is protected or enhanced in landscapes with outstanding scenic value and in other highly used recreation areas and corridors.

Applicable Monitoring Activity, Practice, Or Effect Measured	Methods	When Monitored	Location or Project Area
(1) Preparation of Corridor Scenery Management Plans	Inventory existing scenic integrity. Compare to desired condition and Scenic Integrity Objectives.	Monitoring did not occur.	Monitoring did not occur.
(2) Scenic Integrity Objectives(Acres) High, Moderate, and Low:			

Monitoring Driver(s): Desired Condition. Objective. O-SC-1. Management activities will maintain the Forest’s scenic resource values by meeting as a minimum the Scenic Integrity Objectives in Table O-SC-1 and on Figure O-SC-1. Higher SIOs may be managed for if deemed appropriate. Areas that do not currently meet SIOs will be considered for scenic enhancement and rehabilitation. (SIO boundaries lie at least one-quarter mile from the actual location of travel ways, recreation sites, and bodies of water with access.)

Applicable Monitoring Activity, Practice, Or Effect Measured	Methods	When Monitored	Location or Project Area
Scenic Integrity Objectives(Acres) High, Moderate, and Low:	Field check vegetation management project areas to determine whether implemented design features and mitigation measures successfully meet or exceed SIOs	Monitoring did not occur.	Monitoring did not occur.

(3) Evaluation and Conclusions.

Desired Conditions/Objectives

Monitoring Driver(s): Desired Condition. D-SC-1. The scenic environment within the Forest ranges from landscapes with high scenic quality, displaying little or no evidence of management activities, to landscapes with low scenic quality where evidence of management activities dominate. High scenic quality is protected or enhanced in landscapes with outstanding scenic value and in other highly used recreation areas and corridors **AND Objective. O-SC-1.** Management activities will maintain the Forest’s scenic resource values by meeting as a minimum the Scenic Integrity Objectives in Table O-SC-1 and on Figure O-SC-1. Higher SIOs may be managed for if deemed appropriate. Areas that do not currently meet SIOs will be considered for scenic enhancement and rehabilitation. (SIO boundaries lie at least one-quarter mile from the actual location of travel ways, recreation sites, and bodies of water with access.)

2005 Accomplishments. Over the past 15 months, the scenery resource management on the Forest has focused primarily on input to midlevel analyses, EISs, EAs for vegetation management projects, and a CE for a fuels reduction project. No post-project monitoring has occurred to date; the majority of projects analyzed during the past 15 months have not been implemented yet.

2005 Accomplishment Contribution Towards Desired Conditions & Objectives

A. FOREST PLAN DIRECTION/FEIS CONDITION				
Record of Decision (7/04)	(DECADE 1)		2005 Accomplishments and/or Condition	
Existing Condition	FP Desired Condition, Objective, or S&G’s	FEIS Projected or Proposed Condition	Actual Accomplishments implemented	Actual Accomplishments & Approved NEPA Decisions
Very High: 0 High: 361,391 Moderate:559,949. Low: 460,027.		Very High: 0 High: 361,391. Moderate: 828,582. Low: 167,121.	Monitoring did not occur.	Monitoring did not occur.

B. ACHIEVEMENT OF FOREST PLAN DIRECTION/FEIS CONDITION			
% Achievement of Decade 1 Direction/Condition		Trend	
Actual accomplishments implemented	Actual Accomplishments & Approved NEPA Decisions	Actual accomplishments implemented	Actual Accomplishments & Approved NEPA Decisions
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Standards and Guides

Standard & Guide Descriptor	Standard & Guide Description	Compliance	Remarks
S-SC-1	Management actions that result in the characterizations for an Unacceptably Low SIO are prohibited.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-1	Temporary openings should appear as follows: High SIO Areas - Temporary openings will be similar in size, shape, and edge characteristics to natural openings in the landscape being viewed. Or, temporary openings will mimic a natural disturbance process typical for the area so that when ground cover has been established the opening appears to be a natural occurrence. Moderate SIO Areas - Temporary openings may be more evident than in High SIO areas. Openings may be larger than those in the surrounding landscape, and after groundcover has become reestablished openings may have the appearance of a management activity. Edge characteristics will be similar to those in the surrounding landscape and not dominate the surrounding landscape. Low SIO Areas - Temporary openings may dominate the view. The shapes of openings reflect vegetation changes in natural openings. Openings also have visual effects and patterns of the shapes, sizes, and edges of natural openings in the surrounding landscape.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-2	The shape and arrangement of structures and improvements along shorelines, riparian areas, and within streams should appear natural and not impede the functional use of the structure.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-3	If fuel breaks are necessary, shaded fuel breaks are preferred. A shaded fuel break involves leaving some pruned standing trees and removing vegetation that could transmit fire from the ground to the tree's branches.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-4	Evidence of temporary activities (such as staking, paint, flagging, equipment maintenance, and staging areas) should be minimized, removed, or cleaned up immediately following project completion in High SIO areas.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-5	In Moderate and High SIO areas, log landings should be screened if they can be viewed from travel ways, recreation sites, and bodies of water with access. After project completion, log landings should be reforested or rehabilitated to mimic natural openings.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-6	In Moderate and High SIO areas, schedule mechanized activities during periods of low recreation use if the mechanized activities can be viewed from travel ways, recreation sites, and bodies of water with access.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.
G-SC-7	Furrows, trenches, fuel breaks, plantations, etc., should be located to reduce linear appearance if they can be viewed from travel ways, recreation sites, and bodies of water with access. Natural appearing edges rather than straight edges will generally be used.	No Monitoring Occurred.	Compliance Unknown.

(4) Necessary Follow-up and Management Recommendations

Monitoring Driver	Follow-up Actions
D-SC-1	Need to prepare at least one corridor management plan in 2006.
O-SC-1	Need to field check effectiveness of project design features and mitigation measures when projects begin to be implemented.

Monitoring Driver	Recommended Management Actions
O-SC-1	Conduct Corridor Management Plans concurrent with mid-level analyses for vegetation projects.

(5) Collaborative Opportunities To Improve Efficiency And Quality Of Program

Collaborator/Partner	Monitoring Activity	Accomplishment
TBD	TBD	TBD